Research Notes:

Research Overview:

Arthur Laughlin enters the record in Iowa as a married farmer, already middle-aged, without a clear trail back to his origins.

Speculative Narrative:

Time Line

13 Feb 1804 - Ireland (location uncertain

Arthur Laughlin's birth date can only be estimated. His gravestone in St. John's Cemetery at Delhi, Delaware, Iowa, states that he was "70 years and 14 days" old when he died on 27 Feb 18741, placing his birth on or about 13 Feb 1804.[2] The stone gives no birthplace. I photographed it myself.

Arthur was born in Ireland, but no birth record has been identified, and no information has been found that names his parents or siblings. County Clare and County Tyrone appear in undocumented family trees as possible places of origin, apparently offered as probabilities rather than conclusions supported by records—no document located to date names a county, parish, or townland.

16 Sep 1839 — New York (speculative candidate) A possible lead for Arthur's earlier life appears in a passenger list:

Arthur Laughlin, male, age 20; birth date about 1819; departed Liverpool, England; arrived 16 September 1839 at New York, New York aboard the ship Suviah.[3]

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[2] More research is needed to confirm the birth location. For birth date, see *Find a Grave* (http://www.findagrave.com), Arthur Laughlin, Memorial #32327034. Gravestone records he was 70 years and 14 days old upon death on 27 Feb. 1874.

[3] **New York, U.S., Arriving Passenger and Crew Lists (including Castle Garden and Ellis Island), 1820-1957**

Two individuals named Laughlin appear on this passenger list. Seven names above Arthur is William M. Laughlin, identified as a schoolmaster from County Tyrone. If this passenger, Arthur, were the same man who later settled in Iowa, his age would understate the gravestone-derived birth year by approximately fourteen years. This record is noted here as a speculative lead only.

Before 24 Nov 1841 Marriage (place and date unknown) Arthur married Susanna McElmeel or McMeel sometime before the birth of their first known child in November 1841.[5] Search for a marriage record in Pennsylvania, Iowa, or Ireland.

Some Catholic baptismal records for the Laughlin children have been located, but these records do not record Susanna's maiden surname and omit the names of baptismal sponsors. Whatever the cause, these records do not assist in identifying Susanna's family, nor do they offer any clues to possible siblings for Arthur or to other family members connected to the couple.

A later clue suggests the family may not have come directly from Ireland to Iowa. Arthur and Susanna's eldest son, James Laughlin, reportedly said that he was "almost born in Pennsylvania." I have not yet relocated the source of this remark, possibly found among James's Civil War–era papers. Pennsylvania.[6]

The statement stands alone, but it is sufficient to justify searching for a marriage record in Pennsylvania.

24 Nov 1841 - Birth of son James C Laughlin (1841 -1908) at Hopkinton, Delaware, Iowa.[7]

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[5] Locate marriage record

[6] Marriage Record

[7] Birth of son James C Laughlin

6 Feb 1844 - Birth of daughter Anna R Laughlin (1844 - 1907) at Cascade, Delaware, Iowa.[8]

1846 - Birth of son William Laughlin (146 -) at Iowa.[9]

May 1850 - Birth of son John Arthur Laughlin at Hopkinton, Delaware, Iowa.[10]

1850 - US Census at Delaware, Iowa.[11]

Arthur Langhlin, 45

Jason Danghlin, 40

James Langhlin, 4

Ann Langhlin, 7

Wm Langhlin, 4

1854 - Birth of son Henry Laughlin (1854 - 1907) at South Fork, Delaware, Iowa.[12]

1856 - Iowa State Census at South Fork, Delaware, Iowa.[13]

Arthur Lauflin, 52

Susanna Lauflin, 45

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[8] Birth of daughter Anna R Laughlin

[9] Birth of son William Laughlin

[10] Birth Record

[11] "United States Census, 1850", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MZ4D-46P: Fri Mar 08 07:02:14 UTC 2024), Entry for Arthur Laughlin and Susan Laughlin, 1850.

[12] Birth of son Henry Laughlin

[13]

James Lauflin, 14

Ann Lauflin, 12

Wm Lauflin, 10

John Lauflin, 4

Henry Lauflin, 2

Henry Laughlin, 5

1860 - US Census at Hopkinton, Delaware, Iowa.[14]

Arthur Laughlin, 55

Susan Laughlin, 50

James Laughlin, 18

Ann Laughlin, 16

William Laughlin, 15

John Laughlin, 10

Henry Laughlin, 5

William Laughlin is last recorded with the family in 1860. No later census entry, probate record, or burial record has been identified that accounts for him. William was not mentioned in the obituary of his sister, Anna Laughlin Beacom15, which named her surviving brother, James Laughlin, and helped identify his family. It is not known whether William survived to adulthood, left the area, or died young.

[14] "United States Census, 1860", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M82J-1M1: Mon Jul 08 06:59:22 UTC 2024), Entry for Ann Miller and John Miller, 1860.

15 For name see O'Brien County, Iowa, death record 1907:6, no. 69, Ann Beacom, 28 Jan 1907; O'Brien County Clerk of District Court, Primghar, Iowa; FHL microfilm #1955112. Location and date is based on the birth of her first child.

1870 - US Census at South Fork, Delaware, Iowa.[16]

Arthur Laughlin, 66

Susan Laughlin, 66

John Laughlin, 16

Henry Laughlin, 15

Henry Laughlin, 5

Ida Loomis, 16

Henry Laughlin is last recorded with the family in 1860. No later census entry, probate record, or burial record has been identified that accounts for him. William was not mentioned in the obituary of his sister, Anna Laughlin Beacom17, which named her surviving brother, James Laughlin, and helped identify his family. It is not known whether William survived to adulthood, left the area, or died young.

27 Feb 1874 - Death at South Fork, Delaware, Iowa.[18]

Mar 1874 - Burial Iowa.[19]

[16] "United States Census, 1870", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MDJB-8KV: Tue Mar 05 07:15:59 UTC 2024), Entry for Arthur Laughlin and Susan Laughlin, 1870.

17 For name see O'Brien County, Iowa, death record 1907:6, no. 69, Ann Beacom, 28 Jan 1907; O'Brien County Clerk of District Court, Primghar, Iowa; FHL microfilm #1955112. Location and date is based on the birth of her first child.

[18] Death Record

[19] "Find a Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVK3-DNSZ : 4 October 2023), Arthur Laughlin, ; Burial, Delhi, Delaware, Iowa, United States of America, Saint Johns Cemetery; citing record ID 32327034, *Find a Grave*, http://www.findagrave.com.

Arthur Laughlin was buried at St. John's Cemetery in Delhi, Delaware, Iowa.[20] His gravestone records that he was aged "70 years and 14 days" at the time of his death.

I photographed Arthur Laughlin's gravestone at St. John's Cemetery, a small cemetery at the edge of a cornfield outside Delhi. Arthur is not buried near any other individuals with the Laughlin surname, and no graves in the cemetery suggest the presence of an extended Laughlin family. Several nearby graves bear the surnames McElmeel and McMeel, both of which appear in DNA matches associated with Arthur's wife, Susanna. No individual buried at St. John's has yet been conclusively linked to her.

Two small, broken stones lie near Arthur's grave. Their inscriptions, if any, are no longer legible. No record has been found that associates these stones with William Laughlin or the older Henry Laughlin, but their proximity is noted, given the absence of any identified burial locations for either boy.

DNA Findings Outside the Documentary Record

The oldest tested relative on my Laughlin line is Janet Boddicker, daughter of Esther Laughlin Wheeler. Another tested relative is Joyce King, daughter of Marguerite Laughlin King. Both tested with Family Tree DNA.

Janet's Ancestry results show 23% Irish and 23% Scottish ancestry on her maternal side. These results suggest that her mother, Esther Laughlin Wheeler, was likely almost entirely Irish, while her father, David Wheeler, was likely nearly entirely Scottish. All four of Esther Laughlin's maternal grandparents immigrated from Ireland and ultimately settled in Delaware County, Iowa.

Ancestry DNA results further indicate that Janet's Irish ancestry traces primarily to Ulster, with genetic links to North Monaghan and South Fermanagh, North Monaghan and South Tyrone, Southeast Ulster, and Northeast Leinster.

Janet's Irish ancestry derives solely through her paternal grandparents, Arthur Laughlin and his wife, Susanna McElmeel. Taken together, her DNA results are consistent with both Arthur and Susanna having origins in the northern counties of Ireland, although the current DNA evidence does not allow their ancestral lines to be distinguished from one another.

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One couple appears repeatedly in the family trees of DNA matches associated with this line: James McKenna (GHDY-TFQ) and Sarah McElmeel (L1JB-3Q2) from County Monaghan. Their relationship to Arthur Laughlin or to Susanna McElmeel has not been established, and the connection remains unresolved.